The Comanches

845 The magical associations of buffalo hides with tails is not clear, but the effect of otter medicine is obvious. Otters like to slide down slippery mud banks. With similar ease the child will slide out. A conception of the birth lodge as a symbolic womb is also there. Just as the medicine man emerges through the door (vagina), so will the child.

846 When the baby was born, the doleful cries and monotonous songs of the attendants immediately changed to rejoicing. After the umbilical cord had been cut, the medicine woman wrapped it and hung it in a hackberry tree when one was convenient. If it was undisturbed before it rotted, the child was supposed to have a long and fortunate life. The medicine woman carried the afterbirth and threw it in a running stream (the purifier that nullifies power). The baby was bathed and wrapped in soft rabbit skins and placed in its cradle-board. The number of days the new mother remained in bed was set by the attending midwife. In recent times, ten days is considered the customary time needed for recovery, but there are cases on record where the woman had had serious difficulty and yet was on her feet going about her way before an attendant had washed and wrapped the baby. During the entire time of confinement no man except a doctor entered her tipi. The grandfather, however, always came right away to ask the sex of the child. He stood outside the lodge, and if it was a boy, the women within would call, "*ɛhaitsma*" ("It's your close friend"). If a girl, they simply say, "*ɜɜamop'ma*" ("It's a girl"). The new mother was not allowed to eat a single bite of meat; "it makes blood and would cause hemorrhage." Each day sage was burned over the coals to purify the tipi. One of the first things the woman did when she got up from her bed was to bathe in running water. A proud father usually made it a point to give away something. Normally his generosity was limited to the first person who came to see the new baby. If it was a boy and the father well-to-do, the gift would be a horse.[23]

841 During menstruation a woman went into confinement. If her husband had medicine (and what man did not?), she could not sleep

[23] This description of childbirth is compiled from statements by informants Medicine Woman, Kills Something, and Post Oak Jim; also, House, *op. cit.*, 59; W. T. Corlett, *The Medicine Man of the American Indians* (report of a frontier surgeon stationed at Fort Sill in 1869), 269.

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

patient is liberally dosed with this decoction until the symptoms subside. According to Sanapia, this root is unusually hard and therefore difficult to prepare for use as a medicine. However, she considers its extreme hardness as a positive quality since she associates hardness with compactness; therefore, she feels there is more medicine to a piece of *kusiwɔna* than there would be to practically any other medicine of equal size. 273 824 755 757

In the treatment of victims of witchcraft, a decoction of this root is utilized in several different ways. It can be made into a thick paste which is applied to an area of minute incisions which are made by Sanapia with slivers of glass before she begins to suck from the victim the magically toxic feather which has been introduced into the victim's body by the witch. The decoction can also be drunk by the patient, or it can be spewed on him by Sanapia in the course of treatment. [754]

do:ltsa

[No translation] [No specimen]

Sanapia obtains this medicine from Shoshone friends who live on the Fort Washakie reservation in central Wyoming. She utilizes the thick root of this plant, without modification, as a medicine to induce appetite and stimulate weight gain. A decoction made from this root is also used in the treatment of tuberculosis.

From Sanapia's description of *do:ltsa* and its properties, it could be suggested that this plant is *Perideridia gairdneri*, a wild caraway, called *yap* by the Comanches (Kearney 1951:615). Since Sanapia first acquired this medicine from an Arapaho uncle, who in turn suggested to her certain Shoshone as further sources for it, the name which she uses may well be Arapaho, Shoshone, or Sanapia's Comanche-ized corruption of an Arapaho or Shoshone word which is applied to this plant. [177]

bɔ:tasas

"looks like feathers" [No specimen]

This medicine, like sweet sage, is obtained for Sanapia by Fort Sill Apaches from the Mescalero country. The fruiting body is made into an infusion which is internally administered in the treatment of tuberculosis, various stomach complaints, and postnatal hemorrhaging. A thick paste is prepared from these fruiting bodies and applied as a liniment to the chest and throat of those suffering from pneumonia. No specimen would be obtained. However, from Sanapia's description, *Agoseris* might be suggested as a highly probably genus affiliation. [846]

oinatsu

"vomit medicine" [No specimen]

Sanapia reports but one use for this medicine plant. A decoction of the root is taken internally by patients afflicted with asthma or chest congestion. The described results are quite spectacular.